

May 22, 2006

# Afghanistan **Freedom**

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

## Watch



**Coalition conducts  
Exercise Inspired  
Gambit**

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**Dutch soldiers from the Deployment Task Force at Kandahar Airfield pay their respects by raising their flag during a memorial service honoring those who sacrificed their lives in Holland in 1945. May 5 signifies the end of WWII for the Dutch.**

Photo by Army Sgt. Mayra Kennedy  
345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**Cover: A Pakistani soldier pulls security in the prone position after unloading an MI-17 helicopter during Exercise Inspired Gambit in Pakistan.**

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

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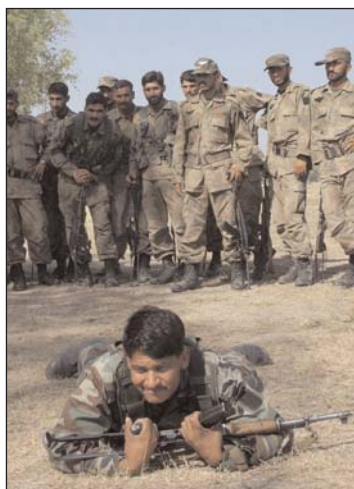
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## **Afghanistan Freedom Watch**

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

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Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry  
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# Non-battle injuries, deaths should be zero

**By Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Wood**

*CFC-A command sergeant major*

**KABUL, Afghanistan** -- Every Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Airman and civilian is critical to accomplishing our mission in Afghanistan. We all have left someone or something behind in order to give our time and talents to the people of this war-torn land. We assume certain inherent risks by serving in a combat zone, but we can mitigate many of these risks by taking certain precautions and actions.

Almost 50 percent of deaths in the Combined Joint Operations Area have been because of non-battle related accidents. In every modern conflict with the exception of Korea, accidents have been the major cause of casualties, more than 54 percent. You might say we are our own worst enemy.

I think we would all agree any loss of life because of an accident is unacceptable. So the question presents itself, how do we get after it?

We could talk about ballistic eyewear, seatbelts, add-on armor and battle locked up-armored humvee doors. We can review



Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Matt Summers

**Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Wood, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan command sergeant major, talks with infantrymen May 16 at Jalalabad Airfield. The sergeant major recently visited several forward operating bases to discuss safety issues and concerns with Soldiers and shoot a safety video designed to teach military members deploying to Afghanistan more about local operating conditions.**

weapon clearing procedures, rollover drills and aircraft safety procedures.

These are all very important subjects and procedures, and are regularly addressed in different forums and briefings across the land. So why are vehicle accidents and negligent discharges hap-

pening every day? Why are heavy equipment operators not wearing hard-hats and crew chiefs climbing on aircraft without proper protection or when the rotor blades are still turning?

**See SAFETY Page 4**

## Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



**I am well?**

**Dari**

**Khub? (Mawn may-tah-wah-nahm shoo-mah-rah koo-mahk kun-um)**

**Pashtu**

**Zu cowalaishum tat a kumaq wacoum? (Zuh cow-al-ish-um tah tah kum-ack wah-coum)**

**Afghan cultural tidbit**

***In Afghanistan, boys and girls are schooled separately in primary school. Under the Taliban regime, girls were not allowed to have education at any level. Women and girls can now partake in education throughout the country.***

# Allied leaders, Kunar elders meet in Korengal

By Army Sgt. 1st Class

Michael Pintagro

Task Force Spartan public affairs

**JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** -- Afghan National Army commanders, Afghan National Policemen and key Coalition leaders discussed the security, reconstruction and future of eastern Afghanistan during a shura conducted May 2 in the Korengal Valley of eastern Afghanistan.

Afghan security officials called for a united Afghan front against terror and pledged to help Korengal villagers achieve peace, security and prosperity.

Coalition commanders discussed promises kept to eastern Afghans and introduced incoming leaders to 25 elders and 60 other villagers representing regional towns as Korengal, Babial, Ali Abad, Dounga, Darbab, Laekala and Lehlbad.



Photos by Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Pintagro

**Army Col. John Nicholson, the commander of Task Force Spartan, discusses regional reconstruction with village elders during a shura held May 2 in the Korengal Valley of eastern Afghanistan.**

"We're going to stay here and help you establish peace and security in this valley," said ANA Lt. Col. Mohammad Ishaq, the commander of 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade,

203rd ANA Corps.. "We should work together. We should cooperate to prevent the enemy from hiding in the caves and

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## SAFETY from, Page 3

I would have to say some of us just don't get it. People don't plan on being burned, electrocuted, shot, run over or fall off a piece of equipment. An accident is defined as "an unplanned behavior or condition." An accident kind of just sneaks up on you.

Education is a key, but awareness and action are essential in defeating this enemy. We have got to "own the risk." This simply means we need to identify the risk and determine the outcome by initiating some control measures. We call this risk management.

We are living in dangerous times in a dangerous land and cannot afford to be caught off-guard. Composite risk management is being aware of potential threats at all times and taking action when required.

It goes hand-in-hand with being battle focused. Whether that threat is an enemy combatant or our own humvee on a narrow road, we must treat it with the same level of aware-

ness - both could kill us.

This is not just a leader's business; safety is in everyone's job description. Just as good leadership has to do with educating, enabling and encouraging, good risk managers know the drills, have the appropriate safety kit and apply the knowledge and gear at the right time in order to reduce the risk.

If you do not own the risk, it will own you. If it owns you, you are on borrowed time and eventually that accident will sneak up on you, and you or your buddy will be injured or dead.

I believe most of us know the hazards, although as time passes we tend to become more complacent and assess them less. Many assess the hazard, but figure they will take the chance nothing serious will occur. This is the old "it won't happen to me" mind set.

Many control measures already exist in the way of standard operating procedures, battle drills, safety procedures and checklists. Some people make it a habit to short cut or side step these control meas-

ures due to a self-imposed time constraint. "I didn't have time to put my seatbelt on" or "I had to speed because I needed to pass that truck" are a couple of common side steps.

Failing to implement controls and enforce standards are two main reasons we are losing people and equipment on a regular basis.

The concept of "never bypassing a threat" needs to be taken to heart by everyone. If you see a potential risk or an accident just waiting to happen, do something! It is just too easy to say "buckle up," or "slow down" or "drop the magazine first."

The saying "choose the hard right over the easy wrong" is not always true. It's easy to do the right thing, you just have to get used to doing it. Let's start preventing vehicle accidents and negligent discharges by opening our mouths and pointing out what we know to be right.

Get a grip, own the risk. Every member of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan is a valuable combat multiplier.

The need for safety and risk management extends across services and across Coalition forces and contractor boundaries. Our goal as a force should be zero non-battle injuries or death. We may not get to zero, but we need to head in that direction.

On a final note, we must remember we are not an occupying force. We are visitors in this country and here to help build credibility and confidence in the government of Afghanistan.

The concept of "Afghan First" needs to be applied to our driving habits on the roads and in the cities and villages across this country. Cutting off vehicles and leaving dust clouds through villages is not only unsafe, but detrimental to building a long-term working relationship with the people of this growing democracy.

The way you act or perform during your tour will have a direct impact on those U.S. and Coalition members who follow you. Watch out for yourself, watch out for your buddy and watch out for that risk.

# Bridge flies to new home in Uruzgan

**By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry**  
**19th Public Affairs Detachment**

**TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan** -- A flurry of dust and dirt kicked off the first day of an operation to move a bridge from Tarin Kowt to its permanent home in southern Afghanistan's Uruzgan Province May 6.

A CH-47 Chinook helicopter hovered above the ground as an Army Special Forces sergeant and his team of riggers attached a load of bridge components to the aircraft.

"Right now we're sling-loading bridge parts out to the bridge site," said the sergeant who is assigned to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan.

The bridge, which will be constructed by a team of Canadian and Afghan National Army engineers, is part of an effort to improve Afghanistan's economy and infrastructure.

This will connect two villages, allowing them better access to medical care, shops and bazaars. It will give them a connection to the outside world, said ANA Capt. Amrullah Kohbandy, a company commander assigned to the 4th Kandak, 1st



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

**A CH-47 Chinook helicopter carries bridge parts to a location in southern Afghanistan's Uruzgan Province May 6.**

Brigade, 205th Corps out of Kandahar.

The engineers cannot accomplish their mission until the Army riggers accomplish theirs.

"I package it up... I get it there," the American sergeant said.

"Getting it there" is a task easier said than done.

The sergeant's team had to calculate

weights, coordinate aircraft and a secure a landing zone. Additionally, a recovery team was needed to handle the parts on the receiving end.

"This sling-load operation is expected to take place over a three-day period," he said.

It will take 26 trips to move the thousands of bridge parts, he added.

## Enduring Voices

*What do you enjoy most about your job?*



**Air Force Tech. Sgt. Heather Robertson**  
 Aeromedical evacuation technician  
 Bagram Airfield

*"Getting casualties evacuated safely."*



**Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael Leach**  
 Aircraft mechanic crew chief  
 Bagram Airfield

*"I enjoy keeping planes in the air."*



**Army Sgt. James Romero**  
 Dining facility rations NCO  
 Kandahar Airfield

*"I help keep morale up by supporting the firebases with money, food and mail."*



**Army Spc. Ronald Benson**  
 Military Policeman,  
 Kandahar Airfield

*"I enjoy the diversity. I do something new each day."*

# Gambit takes aim

By Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste  
19th Public Affairs Detachment

**SOUTHWEST ASIA** -- Soldiers from the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan earlier this month conducted basic close-range marksmanship along with room entering and clearing training as part of a historic exercise in Pakistan named Inspired Gambit.

The purpose of the training was to enhance military knowledge and capabilities of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also develop and build trust between the two nations, said Army Sgt. 1st Class William Partin, a light fighter school cadre member with the 10th Mountain Infantry Division.

The day's training began with leaders from the three nations attending a class on how four-man teams enter and clear rooms. While the leaders were in class, soldiers practiced basic short-range marksmanship by shooting stationary targets that were about 15-meters away.

"They were all very good marksmen," said Partin. "They did what we trained them to do. They aimed center mass at the target and did well."

Later in the day, the leaders had a chance to apply what they had learned in their morning class and taught their Soldiers how to properly enter and clear a room.

"The leaders took their soldiers and showed them step-by-step how to enter and clear a room," said Partin. "They did a great job for just learning those techniques."

Soldiers practiced entering and clearing in "glass houses," which are outlines of rooms without walls, and then proceeded to practice in actual rooms.

"We saw a great deal of improvement as the training went on," said Partin. "They were very motivated and wanted to continue to train. They listened to what the NCOs and instructors were saying and did very well."

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Photos by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

**A Pakistani Special Service Group soldier hits his mark during basic close range marksmanship training during Exercise Inspired Gambit in Pakistan.**

**A Pakistani soldier demonstrates a Pakistani combat maneuver during Exercise Inspired Gambit in Pakistan.**



# American Soldiers train Afghan medics

By Army Spc.

James H. Tamez

19th Public Affairs Detachment

**CAMP SPANN, Afghanistan** -- In an effort to prepare Afghan National Army medics for combat, U.S. combat medics from the 53rd Logistical Taskforce provided medical training here May 9.

The training consisted of classroom exercises and a practical exercise, which tested both medical training and troop movements.

"We are teaching them how to treat various types of casualties," said U. S. Army Sgt. Tash Shaheen, combat medic, C Company, 53rd Logistical Task Force, from Sarasota, Fla. "We covered sucking chest wounds, chest decompression, abdominal



Photo by Army Spc. James H. Tamez

Yama Hussam (right), translates for Army Sgt. Tash Shaheen on how to treat ANA Pvt. Islamudin (front) during combat medic training on May 9. The instructions were being given to ANA Pvt. Noorhumat (left) while Platoon Sgt. Haroon (left center, rear) observes.

See MEDICS, Page 10

## Improvised explosive device makers detained

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan Public Affairs

**KABUL, Afghanistan** -- Afghan and Coalition forces conducted a successful operation Sunday that resulted in the apprehension of seven terrorist facilitators in the Khowst region near the village of Sawazak Kala.

The purpose of this operation was to detain individuals suspected of terrorist and anti-Afghanistan activities.

These individuals are associated with and actively support



U.S. Army photo

Improvised explosive devices, such as the one in the trunk of this car, can pose a threat to Coalition forces in Afghanistan as well as Afghan civilians.

the Haqqani, or "HQ," network by providing improvised explosive device (IED) training. Additionally they are suspected of IED construction and emplacement as well as being participants during attacks on Coalition and Afghan forces.

During the course of the operation, Afghan and Coalition forces encountered hostile elements. No casualties were reported.

Four compounds and a total of 13 structures were entered during the operation. Only men of military age were questioned. The only items removed from the locations were suspicious effects directly related to the seven detainees. These items will be used in further investigations.

The seven men have been detained and are being questioned regarding their participation in terrorist activities. The targets of the operation, two key IED manufacturers, were among the seven detained.

"Effective operations such as these further increase the security and stability of Afghanistan," said Col. Thomas Collins, Coalition spokesman. "The Afghan and Coalition forces will not tolerate attacks against the innocent people of Afghanistan and will continue to hunt terrorists and terrorist facilitators relentlessly until they are brought to justice."



A Pakistani soldier practices high crawling during Exercise Inspired Gambit in Pakistan.

(Right) A P  
during Exe

(Below) A P  
second rus



A Pakistani member of the Khattare Band dances with swords entertaining U.S., Afghan and Pakistani troops observing a culture show.

# Soldiers conclude

By Army Pfc. Michael Nyeste  
19th Public Affairs Detachment

**SOUTHWEST ASIA** -- Exercise Inspired Gambit 2006 recently concluded in an undisclosed location in Pakistan.

Gambit began in 1993 as a joint-military exercise between the U.S. and Pakistan. However, Gambit 2006 was the first ever joint-military exercise between the U.S., Pakistan and Afghanistan, making this year's exercise truly special, said Army Maj. Jeff Ramsey, the officer in charge of lower level operations and administration for Gambit for the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

The purpose of the exercise was to enhance the skill and knowledge of military tactics, improve relations between nations and improve the interoperability so the three nations will be even more effective in combating terrorism, especially along the Afghan and Pakistani border, Ramsey said.

Training conducted for Gambit included air assault helicopter training, basic combat maneuver techniques, combat and search training, enemy prisoner of war search and seizure tactics, room entering and clearing tactics and helicopter sling loading procedures, Ramsey added.

Soldiers were not only training, but

Pakistani soldier uses helicopter guiding signals he just learned during Exercise Inspired Gambit to guide in a MI-17 helicopter safely.

Pakistani soldier maintains security while performing three-to-five pushes during maneuvers as part of Exercise Inspired Gambit.



Photos by Army Pfc. Michael Nyeste

## exercise

also interacting and developing relations and friendships. The highlight of the interaction happened during a culture show where the three nations performed and danced together in a large circle, Ramsey said.

"It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to be involved in a cultural event involving three countries," Ramsey explained.

Gambit concluded with a company level cordon and search of a mock village that was observed by high ranking officials and diplomats from each country and closing ceremony where soldiers were congratulated on a historic job well done.



U.S, Afghan and Pakistani soldiers conduct basic close range marksmanship during Exercise Inspired Gambit in Pakistan.



Photo by Army Spc. James H. Tamez

**Afghan National Army Pvt. Noor Ahamd quickly carries ANA Pvt. Mir Abdul away from a hot zone during the practical exercise on May 9. Noor and Mir are combat medics with the 5th Kandak, 209th Shaheen Corps.**

## MEDICS from Page 6

wounds and head injuries."

Shaheen said when they first started giving the classes, the ANA personnel knew very little about treating casualties.

"When we first got here, they knew essentially nothing about medical treatment," Shaheen said. "Now, they are well on their way to being able to train others."

"The medical training they received when going through their basic training was nearly nonexistent," said U.S. Army Pfc. John Anderson, combat medic, C Company, 53rd Logistical Task Force, from Largo, Fla. "We will work with them to become as proficient at being medics as the trainers. We want to impart as much knowledge as we can with the ANA medics."

Anderson said he was very surprised at the speed in which the ANA medics were learning the information and applying it during the practical exercise.

"The majority of the ANA medics are illiterate, but they are extremely fast learners,"

Anderson said. "They are absorbing the information. And they are retaining what they have learned here. Self sustainment is the goal. We want them to be able to train others."

Shaheen said the practical exercise consisted of two missions. The first required the soldiers to retrieve three fallen comrades from an unsecured location with enemy combatants in the area. The second had the ANA personnel engaged in troop movements through urbanized terrain.

Shaheen said the enemy, played by U.S. and ANA personnel, harassed the medics in both missions, causing the medics to think on their feet and remove the casualties from the area. Shaheen said this type of training is very important for the medics to understand the possible situations they may have to face.

"These are the common things medics should know," Shaheen said. "Having a competent medic enhances morale. The soldiers know that if they get hurt, there is someone there who can take care of them."



Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nveste

## GAMBIT from Page 6

"I think they did very well," said Pakistani Army Lt. Col. Ikran Ul Haq, the battalion commander of the 4th Commando Battalion of his Pakistani Soldiers. "They made no mistakes. Everyone was very responsive and wanted to learn."

Exercise Inspired Gambit concluded May 12.

"I'm very impressed with how far these men have come in a short period of time," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Erik Wineland, the embedded trainer for the Afghan Army 201st Corps, with the central core advisory group of the Afghan soldiers. "Their desire to learn is insatiable."

**U.S, Afghan and Pakistani soldiers conduct basic close range marksmanship training during Exercise Inspired Gambit in Pakistan.**

# Soldiers keep friends safe, teach others how

By Army Spc.

James H. Tamez

19th Public Affairs Detachment

**CAMP SPANN, Afghanistan** -- For two security forces Soldiers assigned to Camp Spann, securing the area is more than their job, it's personal.

Army Specialists Daniel LaCruz and Dustin McGinnis, security forces, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery, work hard to make sure the areas they patrol are safe for themselves, those in their unit and others from Camp Spann.

Doing a good job keeps their friends and adopted family safe until they can all go home.

"Today we're working the entry control point," LaCruz said. "We check each of the vehicles for anything out of the ordinary."

The Soldiers also check on the personnel within the vehicles and conduct searches on them as well.

"It's not like being a military policeman working as a gate guard back in the states," McGinnis said. "On a normal day, they could have a few hundred cars moving through the gates in the morning. It can be impersonal."

LaCruz said family is a big part of the reason he is here in Afghanistan. He said it is why he feels being here and working



Photo by Army Spc. James H. Tamez

**Army Spc. Daniel LaCruz uses a mirror to check for explosives underneath a vehicle while Army Spc. Dustin McGinnis speaks with the driver attempting to enter Camp Spann on May 7. Lacruz and McGinnis, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery, are part of the security forces there.**

so hard is important.

"We know everybody in here," LaCruz said. "We've become a tight knit group... a family of sorts."

"I came over here to keep my family back home safe," LaCruz said. "By doing these jobs here, we don't have to do them back home."

"I don't want anything to happen to them," McGinnis added. "So I work hard to make sure that nothing does."

LaCruz said the importance of their

work at the ECP is obvious.

They are the first line of defense against vehicle-born improvised explosive devices, homicide bombers and enemy insurgents attempting to gain entry to the camp.

LaCruz said the ECP is only a part of the security forces area of responsibility.

"I like going out with the embedded training teams," LaCruz said. "I get to

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## PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

**Airmen assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron cover a rooftop from the ground with M-4 rifles during Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) training at Bagram Airfield on May 9.**

Photo by Air Force Maj. David Kurlle  
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to [freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil). Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

# Wounded Lava Marine returns to combat in Afghanistan

**By Marine Sgt.**

**Joe Lindsay**

**Task Force Lava public affairs**

**JALALABAD AIRFIELD,**

**Afghanistan** — There was a persistent ringing in his ears that just wouldn't go away — piercing, consuming, unyielding.

It's been more than one year since Marine Cpl. Emilio Diaz Jr., a 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment machine gunner, was riding in a humvee that hit an improvised explosive device outside of Fallujah, Iraq. Although violently rocked, Diaz somehow remained in

his turret position atop the vehicle, where he was manning a .50 caliber machine gun.

When he woke up after the explosion, he was still atop the humvee, still in the seated position, being held up only by his gunner's strap. He wasn't sure how much time had gone

by. Marines were running around on the road below him yelling, but he couldn't make out what they were saying over the ringing — a constant ringing.

The humvee he was riding in just a few minutes before had been transformed into a heap of twisted metal. The .50 caliber gun he had been manning was in pieces. He thought, perhaps, he was dead — that his buddies were dead. But he wasn't dead. And his friends weren't dead. In fact, just he and one other Marine in the humvee were wounded in the explosion. The IED blast had come sideways from a tree, destroying everything in its midst, save the Marines. Some said their flak jackets and helmets saved them, or that the vehicle's armor saved them. Others just called it luck and left it at that.

When the Purple Heart was pinned on his chest some months later, back at his unit's home base of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, he called it the proudest moment of his life, with the possible exception of the day he graduated boot camp and became a Marine.

But the ringing in his ears — the ringing was still there.

"Right after the IED hit, I went deaf. After a month, I was still deaf," said Diaz, recounting his story as he pre-

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Photo by Marine Sgt. Joe Lindsay

**Marine Cpl. Emilio Diaz Jr., a 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment machine gunner with Weapons Company, Combined Anti-Armor Team 1 (CAAT 1), stands in front of a humvee before embarking on a mission near Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Diaz received the Purple Heart for injuries sustained in Iraq on 1/3's last combat deployment when his humvee was hit by an improvised explosive device.**

## TEACH from Page 11

meet with a lot of the locals and work with the Afghan National Army personnel."

LaCruz said rolling out with the ETTs gives him the opportunity to work with the ANA and help teach them. He said they work dismounted patrols through some of the local cities and villages with the ANA. They work on patrolling streets and being aware of the surrounding area.

McGinnis said working with the ANA and teaching them gives him a sense of pride in himself and those he works with.

"We're here to help people who have been oppressed for years," McGinnis said. "We're here to help them stand on their own to feet."

LaCruz said doing this work gives him a



Photo by Army Spc. James H. Tamez

**Army Spc. Dustin McGinnis checks the engine compartment of a vehicle on May 7. McGinnis, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery, is part of the security forces protecting Camp Spann.**

sense of accomplishment.

"The way the ANA looks at us and sees us interact with the locals...they smile

and want to learn what we know,"

LaCruz said. "I'm glad to have this opportunity."

## MEET from Page 4

the mountains. We need your help.”

“We’re from the same province and the same tribe,” said ANP Col. Mohammad Hassan, the Kunar provincial police chief. “We need to have peace.”

Hassan urged the assembled villagers to “help defeat the terrorists,” noting the international implications of the mission at hand. The terrorists made Afghanistan the center of terrorism, and now the terrorists want to destroy Afghanistan, he said.

The police chief praised allied anti-terror and reconstruction efforts, noting Afghan and American partners alike respect the people’s faith and culture.

“The ANA and Coalition soldiers have come here a long way from their places and their families in order to bring peace to this valley,” Hassan said. “The ANA soldiers are also Muslims, and they understand our culture. The Coalition is not here to occupy this place or attack Islam. They’re here to help.”

Coalition leaders noted their delivery on promises made during Operation Mountain Lion, making prominent mention of a new allied base in the Korengal designed to enhance regional security. They also took the opportunity to introduce key incoming leaders to the shura.

“We’re living up to the commitments we made when we came into this region,” said Army Col. John Nicholson, the Task Force Spartan commander and leader of

the Coalition delegation. “During our last meeting, you told us security was your number one concern. The base the ANA is establishing is evidence we’re living up to our promise.”

Nicholson also noted Coalition medical and construction efforts in the region. In return, the colonel added, the allies need villagers’ cooperation and vigilance against terror threats.

Marine Lt. Col. Chip Bierman, commander of Task Force Lava, outlined Coalition fidelity to its promises and invoked hospitality, a powerful theme in Pashtun culture.

A neighbor helps a neighbor, said Bierman, from Madison, Wis. “A neighbor protects a neighbor, and one neighbor treats another with respect.”

He also contrasted the ANA and Coalition vision of the future with the one that terrorists aimed to impose.

“The government of Afghanistan and the Coalition offer you a choice; the enemy does not,” said Bierman. “You can join us and raise your children to be educated, free and prosperous. The enemy offers you nothing except more misery, more fighting and more poverty.”

Bierman introduced Army Lt. Col. Chris Cavoli, whose Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, play a prominent role in allied operations in northeastern Afghanistan.

Noting his own highland heritage, the battalion commander appealed to the spir-

it of mountain men.

Cavoli said his infantrymen “came out of these mountains to help bring this valley the peace and prosperity it deserves.” But, he added, the task force cannot do it alone.

“Afghanistan is a country for Afghanistan,” he said. “It should receive help from Afghans.”

In response, elders voiced support for allied aims, denounced terrorists operating in the area and pledged to work for regional peace and stability. The elders eagerly embraced reconstruction efforts. Many, however, voiced repeated concerns about “outsiders” operating in the mountains and the threat they pose to the people of the Korengal.

“We know that you come here for security. Our desire also is for security,” said Shamshir Morastano, an elder from the Korengal Valley. Morastano vowed to help the allies establish peace in the valley.

“We’re from the Korengal Valley,” added Abdul Majid of Ashat. “We don’t want to destroy the Korengal Valley. We don’t want to destroy Afghanistan; we want to rebuild Afghanistan.”

Another elder praised the task force for following through on commitments.

“The last time you promised us a road and you have fulfilled that promise,” observed Abdul Aziz, also of Ashat. “Now I have confidence that when you promise a clinic or you promise a school you will fulfill that promise.”

## MARINE from Page 12

pared for yet another combat patrol, this time in Afghanistan. “They kept me in a military hospital in Iraq for about a month, observing me, monitoring me and hoping my hearing would come back.”

Eventually Diaz was sent to Germany and finally back to Hawaii for surgery.

“I was scared I’d never hear again – and also scared I’d get medically discharged from the Marine Corps,” said Diaz, from Brownsville, Texas. “I didn’t want that. I wanted to

be back with the guys. I wanted to hear again. Most of all I wanted the ringing to stop. I hadn’t learned to block it out at that time.”

After successful surgery back in Hawaii, Diaz regained full hearing in his right ear, and most of the hearing in his left ear. Still, though, the ringing persisted.

“It’s basically something I’ve learned to block out, or maybe it’s more accurate to say it’s something I’ve learned to live with,” explained Diaz. “It doesn’t dominate me anymore. I can function again as a

Marine and as a leader of Marines.”

That is good news for the Lava Dogs of 1/3 who are serving with Diaz in CAAT 1 as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

For his part, Diaz said he wouldn’t want to be anywhere else but in Afghanistan.

“These people need our support,” said Diaz. “When we’re out on patrol, the locals wave at us and throw us the Hawaiian shaka hand sign as a gesture of goodwill. I guess it’s something they picked up from 3/3 or 2/3, but they

seem to know that we are from Hawaii. It’s pretty cool. What isn’t cool is that there are enemies here that will kill and terrorize people for being friendly with us.”

But Diaz said he and his fellow Marines are convinced the enemy will be defeated.

“The Afghan people are our friends,” said Diaz. “It’s just that there are pockets of insurgents here, who want to keep the people enslaved both mentally and physically through terror. That is the problem here. We’re gonna fix that problem.”

# Muslim Marines defend freedom, Islam

**By Air Force Senior Airman  
Kellie Nelson**

**American Forces Network - Afghanistan**

**JALALABAD, Afghanistan --**

Though the rebuilding of Afghanistan is underway, the fighting continues. The enemy often uses an extremist interpretation of Islam as a pretext for terrorism.

Several Muslims among the U.S. forces fighting against the enemy forces said they're angry these extremists use their religion as a weapon.

"I feel that the terrorists who are sharing the same religious faith as I am, have kidnapped my religion in order to achieve their own personal agendas," said Marine Staff Sgt. Emir Hadzic, machine gun section leader, B Co, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

"And so, as Muslims, we are directed by God to defend our faith from people like that. I feel that I'm here not only just to defend my nation that was attacked but also to defend my religion's honor."

Hadzic isn't the only Muslim service member upset with the misuse of Islam.

"The religion that I was raised on doesn't teach war," said Marine Lance Cpl. France Mahabub, 1st Battalion 3rd Marine Regiment. "It doesn't teach strapping a bomb to yourself and blowing up innocent children, women and if that's the religion that they're basing this war on... that's not the religion I was raised on."

Hadzic believes the Afghan people are getting the wrong message about Americans and their presence in this Islamic nation.



**Marine Lance Cpl. France Mahabub stands guard in Torkham as an Afghan tanker carrying diesel fuel burns after being struck by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. Mahbub is assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.**

"The bad guys out here... they're trying to teach them that the United States is an exclusively Christian country," Hadzic explained. "But they don't tell them that the United States is a country for all, where everybody lives together in harmony. And one of the things I try to point to a lot of the locals is the United States is a country full of good people, full of God-fearing people regardless of what religion they are... and a real Muslim is supposed to be a tolerant person."

Hadzic said he believes religion is a focal point in many troops' lives, and fighting those of the same faith might cause them a moral dilemma. But he

expressed his confidence in his mission.

"We are defending our faith because we didn't cross the line; they crossed the line," Hadzic said. "There is no holier duty for a Muslim than to defend his faith."

Hadzic said he and his fellow Marines are defending civilians, unlike the terrorists who target civilians.

"We are not indiscriminately destroying civilian targets," he said. "We are destroying the ones who are destroying innocent Muslims."

Standing up to terrorism is his way of voicing where Muslims should stand. "I'm not out there in the streets of Washington, D.C. protesting," he said. "I'm dedicating good years of my life away from my wife and child to defend the United States of America and represent Islam in a true light."

And so Hadzic, Mahabub and other Muslims like them feel they are defending their country and their faith while trying to teach tolerance to both Americans and Afghans, alike.

Photos by Navy Petty Officer James Pinsky, Naval Media Center

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**"I'm dedicating good years of my life away from my wife and child to defend the United States of America and represent Islam in a true light."**

**Marine Staff Sgt. Emir Hadzic  
1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.**

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# Dental delivery

## Soldiers perform life-altering surgery for Afghan Border Patrol Agent

**By Army Sgt. Nina J. Ramon**  
**345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

### BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -

- It was a typical day in Torkham for the Afghan National Police border patrol agents until a couple of U.S. Army Soldiers showed up. "Are any of you sick or injured and in need of medical care in Bagram?" asked one of the Soldiers. From the shadows, Capt. Hazan Gul, an Afghan border patrol agent, stepped forward.

Gul began telling the Soldiers about the day he was injured by an improvised explosive device (IED) while fulfilling his ANP duties.

"It was about six months ago," Gul explained. "By the order of my commander I was told to go to a small village near Torkham to check the area and provide security."

While Gul patrolled the village, an IED activated and violently threw him several feet into the air. When Gul hit the ground he felt an agonizing pain throughout his face. The fall caused multiple fractures his to jaw.

"Some of the members in my unit rushed to my aid and took me to the local Afghan hospital," said Gul. "It was there where I received my first surgery in an attempt to repair my jaw."

Gul stayed in the hospital for a month after the surgery. Soon after being discharged from the hospital he realized something wasn't right. His face began to swell, his teeth did not align properly, making it difficult for him to eat, and he soon lost all feeling around the right side of his jaw. Despite his discomfort, Gul continued to work.

After hearing the unfortunate story of Gul, the Soldiers delivered him via helicopter to the U.S. hospital in Bagram. There he met Army Maj. Robert Stone, the chief oral maxillofacial surgeon with the 14th Combat Support Hospital based in Fort Benning, Ga.

"The first thing I noticed when I saw him was that he probably had an infec-

tion; his face was asymmetrical," Stone, from Madison, Ga., said. "I asked him if his face had been getting bigger recently, but he said that is how it has been. I knew it had to have been something major."

Gul spent his first day here in Bagram getting his teeth cleaned as a pre-operation procedure. "Good dental hygiene is not a wide spread practice in Afghanistan," said Stone. "In order to ensure a successful surgery we had to start at the beginning."

The next day Gul began his six hour surgery by getting a computed tomography scan of his jaw. A CT scan uses x-rays to make detailed pictures of structures inside of the body. After studying the scans, Stone determined the most effective way to perform the surgery.

"We know his top jaw is where we want it. Our goal is to recreate a new bottom jaw that will fit the top jaw," said Stone. "By doing that we know we have established a jaw very similar to the bottom jaw the had pre-injury six months ago."

After identifying from the CT scan where the breaks were located, Stone and his team dissected down to Gul's jaw bone and re-created the breaks. Next they repositioned his teeth and his jaw bone. The final step was to plate the bones with state-of-the-art titanium plates and screws.

The materials we're using don't get any better, Stone said. "The stuff we are using for Hazan is exactly what I would use back in the States. We don't treat Afghan patients any different than we would a U.S. Soldier."

Upon completion of the surgery, Gul was transported to the intensive care ward.

"He will be in pain for the next 24 hours," Stone said. "In order to control the pain we are going to give him a patient controlled anesthesia. We are also going to treat him with antibiotics to prevent an infection as opposed to curing an infection."

Within 24 hours, Gul was able to

eat and walk around. After a few days he is expected to begin therapy.

"We want him to be able to open and close his mouth easily," said Stone. "One of the things I found during the surgery was a lot a scarring and do not know whether or not it was from the previous surgery. I have tried to free up some of the attachments so we will see how that works."

Gul appeared satisfied with the medical treatment he received at Bagram.

"They (U.S. doctors) are very successful in their field. They are going such a good job for us (Afghans)," said Gul. "Our (Afghan) doctors would not be able to do many of the things that the American doctors can do. Many times it is because of the lack of equipment."

During his recovery in the intensive care ward, Gul has had time to reflect on his thoughts regarding his injuries and treatment.

"I have so much in my heart I want to tell you," said Gul, "but instead I will tell my friends and family the great things you did for me and the other Afghans I saw in the hospital."

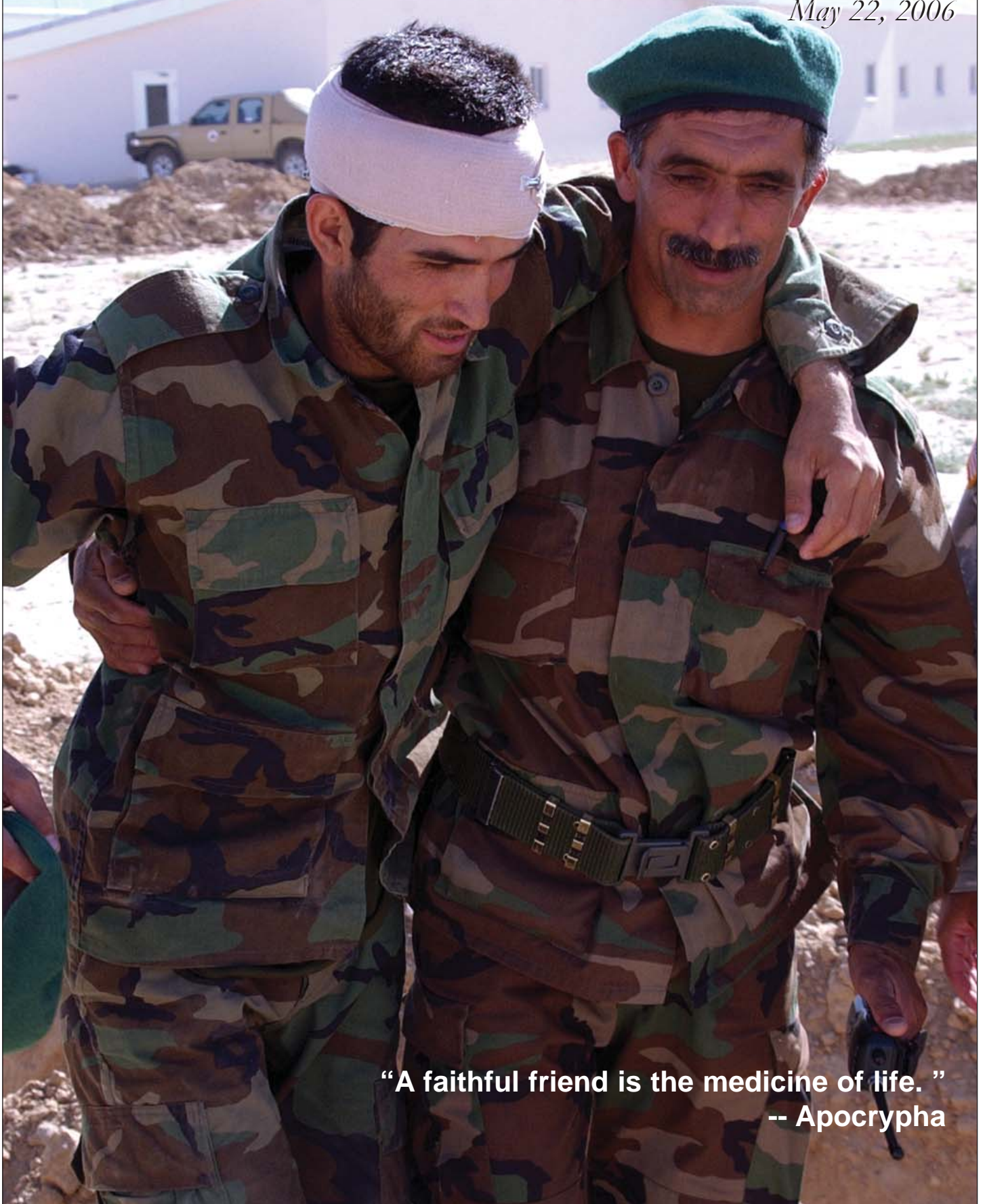


**Army Maj. Robert Stone, the chief oral maxillofacial surgeon with the 14th Combat Support Hospital, from Madison, Ga. gives Hazan Gul a "thumbs-up" sign as he awakes to let him know the surgery went well.**

Photo by Army Sgt. Nina J. Ramone

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**“A faithful friend is the medicine of life.”**

**-- Apocrypha**